

04 Oct. 24

## Terms of Reference

### Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) Framework Development for Regenerative Agriculture Landscape Program

#### 1. Introduction

IDH accelerates and up-scales sustainable trade by building impact-oriented coalitions of front-running companies, civil society, governments, knowledge institutions and other stakeholders in several commodity sectors. We convene the interests, strengths and knowledge of public and private partners in sustainability commodity programs that aim to mainstream international and domestic commodity markets. IDH jointly formulates strategic intervention plans with public and private partners, and we co-invest with partners in activities that generate public goods.

On the basis of these Terms of Reference (“**ToR**”) IDH aims to select a suitable consulting organization or agency (hereinafter the “**Service Provider**”) to develop a comprehensive **Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) framework for the Regenerative Production Landscape Collaborative (RPLC)**.

#### 2. Background

##### **About RPLC**

In the context of intensifying smallholder vulnerability, increasing climatic and environmental risks, and evolving markets, there is an urgent need to reimagine agriculture systems.

Regenerative Production Landscape Collaborative (RPLC) aims to develop resilient agriculture systems that are regenerative and nature positive while creating equitable socio-economic benefits for smallholder farmers and opportunities for businesses to source responsibly through inclusive supply chains.

RPLC is being implemented in 10 cotton-growing districts of Madhya Pradesh, India. Eight of these districts lie in the western part and Chhindwara and Pandhurna lie in the southern part of the state. The total geographic coverage of these districts is ~ 56,000 sq. km, nearly 50% of which is under Agriculture and 21% is under Forests. Around 70% of farmers are small and marginal (landholding less than 2 hectares).

RPLC builds on the legacy work of the Laudes Foundation and other partners from the civil society and private sector, undertaken over the past several years, wherein the focus was to catalyze a shift towards regenerative cotton value chains. The collective work saw considerable success and created lasting positive outcomes for cotton farmers. Some challenges also surfaced.

Over time, acknowledging these systemic challenges which primarily emanated from commodity-focused approach, RPLC was co-conceptualized in 2020 by Laudes Foundation, IDH, and WWF-India to take a Landscape Approach in the 10 districts and convening relevant stakeholders through the RPLC secretariat, established in 2021 at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

By March 2026, through a robust stakeholder coalition that encompasses two multistakeholder platforms or Compacts and one State Governing Council, the program aims to:



1. Bring 100,000 hectares of cropland under sustainable land management practices.
2. Build capacities of 120,000 farmers and enable them to adopt regenerative agriculture systems.
3. Establish governance to sustainably manage 300,000 hectares of land.
4. Have buy-in of 15+ private sector partners to source responsibly and invest in (1) (2) and (3).

### **3. Assignment**

The purpose of this MRV framework is to:

As part of RPLC , we undertake a number of intervention to drive change at farm level and beyond the farm.

- At farm and farmer household level, our focus is on improving climate and economic resilience by building farmer capacity to adopt regenerative agriculture practices, testing climate-friendly technology and nature-based inputs, and enhancing income through derisking or diversification mechanisms such as multi-cropping and access to public entitlements and subsidies.
- Beyond farm, we adopt participatory and inclusive approach to strengthen resilience at landscape level through village-level planning, watershed development, biodiversity mapping and convergence of public funds to build community infrastructure.

Further, we engage directly with brands, retailers, and private sector companies in food and fibre value chains to strengthen supply chain resilience by improving service delivery, reducing carbon footprint, and integrating other de-risking mechanisms.

In our Compacts, which are multistakeholder platforms comprising all our partners - implementation partners, brands and private sector companies, state government, technology partners and so on - the responsibility of Compact delivery lies with all of them as they are signatories to the Compact MoU.

Therefore, the MRV Framework needs to capture all the work and associated impact that the direct and indirect activities of our partners add up to in the landscape. Moreover, the MRV framework needs to be designed in a manner that it is simple, easy to understand, use and implement by all our partners.

The envisaged end-users of the data captured through framework would be funders, investors, food and fibre companies, and philanthropic organisations, among others who would leverage the MRV data to make credible claims and attributions on their work in the landscape in accordance with their climate, sustainability and other global commitments.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of this assignment is to:

1. Review and improve the existing MRV framework for the programs.
2. Develop KPIs to measure impact on key areas such as soil, water, gender, income, biodiversity and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. the MRV framework should clearly outline measurement guidelines and mechanisms on the 6 impact areas.
3. Develop (in a deeply consultative, and iterative approach) an MRV framework tailored to the specific interventions under the RPLC.



4. Ensure the MRV framework aligns with international standards for regenerative agriculture, climate, nature, and jurisdictional landscapes,

### **Deliverables**

#### **1. Initial Assessment:**

- Conduct a thorough review of existing documentation, including program reports, ToC, MRV system, KPI lists, evaluations reports, project concept notes and relevant data.
- Detailed list (non-exhaustive) is provided in Annexure 4
- Identify key indicators and demonstrate understanding between ‘project-level’ monitoring methodology AND landscape level monitoring methodologies (linked to different objectives)
- Review the RPLC Dashboard – to add suggestions on integrating MRV for stakeholder engagement
- Map the indicators against other global sustainability frameworks mentioned in Annex 4.
- An inception report with detailed mapping of frameworks and project planning, including how you will approach this work, consultations, outputs you foresee at different stages.

#### **2. Stakeholder Consultation(s): Cyclical**

- The consultant organization will have 4 primary groups to engage iteratively:
  - RPLC core working group (IDH, Laudes Foundation, WWF India): for project management and process inputs
  - RPLC implementation partners in Dhar and Chindwara region: to get a detailed overview of on-ground program execution and understand the current MRV system.
  - A Subject Matter Expert Advisory Panel (composed and convened by the consultant): we expect the consultant to take the lead in composing this for external, technical input and vetting of deliverables on indicators, methodology etc.
  - RPLC Business Action Group (convened by RPLC team): a small group of private sector partners, donors, and global framework and standards developing organisations like Gold Standard, Quantis, and ISEAL who are vested in the MRV in order to make claims on sustainable sourcing and other impact commitments.
- Consolidate and structure the feedback to visualize how the MRV framework would look for field-level projects, ensuring it aligns with brand commitments and stakeholder expectations.
- Develop a stakeholder analysis stating roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the MRV

#### **3. Develop a comprehensive MRV framework that includes:**

- Indicators and Metrics: Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators for soil health, water management, gender equity, income levels, biodiversity, and GHG emissions.
- Data Collection Methods: Detailed methodologies for data collection, including tools, frequency, and responsible parties.
- Data Management: Systems for data storage, analysis, and reporting, ensuring data integrity and security.
- Verification Protocols: Procedures for verifying the accuracy and reliability of the collected data.



**4. Pilot Testing and Refinement:**

- Implement the MRV framework on a pilot basis in selected sites/projects within the RPLC.
- Conduct pilots to collect and analyse data to identify any issues or gaps in the framework.
- Refine and adjust the MRV framework based on feedback and findings from the pilot phase.

**5. Full Scale MRV System:**

- Roll out the finalized MRV framework across all projects within the RPLC.
- Develop training modules on the MRV framework for RPLC Implementation partners
- Suggest improvements to the RPLC Dashboard to integrate the MRV

**Expectations from the chosen organization:**

- Build, consult and manage an Expert Advisory Panel covering the 6 impact areas for RPLC – to vet the chosen indicators, methodology etc
- Work as a knowledge partner and extended team of RPLC – lead in preparation and facilitation of the MRV consultations with key stakeholder groups (including private sector partners)
- Maintain detailed documentation of consultations, inputs received etc for knowledge management and recall
- Strong project management approach
- Generate key insights/ questions – in an agile, concise and cyclical manner – to maintain high engagement levels that are also mindful of time availability

**4. Selection Procedure**

The procedure will be as follows:

1. Publishing the tender and/or inviting services providers to submit a proposal based on ToR.
2. Option to submit questions regarding the assignment and the ToR.
3. The evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals based on the selection criteria as published in this ToR.
4. Decision on selection of the proposal / service provider.
5. Inception meeting with the selected service provider.

The schedule below indicates the timelines for the tender procedure:

Tender process	Timeline
ToR shared with the consultants	07 Oct 2024
Closing date for the questions on the TOR	15 Oct 2024
Submission of expression of interest (via email)	
Response to the questions	22 Oct 2024
Q&A webinar by IDH/RPLC team with TOR applicants	



Deadline for submission of proposals*	1800 HRS IST, 30 Oct 2024
Team pitch and presentation of Proposal of shortlisted firms**	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of November 2024
Selection of Service provider	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of November 2024
Complete the contracting process and start of assignment	4 <sup>th</sup> week of November 2024

\* Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered in the tender procedure.

\*\* IDH may request shortlisted Service providers to a pitch session via video conference.

After the deadline to submit a proposal has passed, the evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals. The proposals will first be tested for completeness:

- The absence of the documents referred to in Section 5 of this document can lead to exclusion from further participation in the tender procedure. This is also the case when minimum requirements listed in this ToR are not met.
- If the proposal is complete, the selection committee will evaluate the proposal based on the criterion as mentioned in Section 6.

The assignment will be awarded to the service provider with the most economically advantageous tender. This is determined based on the evaluation criteria price and quality. IDH will reject the proposal if any illegal or corrupt practices have taken place in connection with the award or the tender procedure.

### Questions

Questions regarding the assignment or the ToR can be submitted until 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024, 1800 Hrs Indian Standard Time, by e-mail to Preity Khandelwal (at [khandelwal@idhtrade.org](mailto:khandelwal@idhtrade.org)) and Bishal Chhetri (at [chhetri@idhtrade.org](mailto:chhetri@idhtrade.org)) with the subject line: "Questions: Tender RPLC MRV Framework development".

The responsibility for the timely and accurate submission of the questions lies with the applicant. When IDH indicates that IDH has not received questions before the indicated deadline, the service provider must demonstrate that the questions were sent timely.

### 5. Proposal requirements

IDH is requesting the service providers to hand in a proposal of a maximum 12 pages (excluding CVs, sample work and references). The proposal must be submitted in a MS Word or a PowerPoint version next to a PDF submission to facilitate any copy and pasting of the content that we may need during evaluation.

The proposal must at least include:

#### Content:

- a) A document of maximum 12 pages that clearly describes the approach addressing the required services as described in Section 3.1 of this document. We request that the proposal



structure matches the selection criteria as closely as possible. It should demonstrate how the applicant intends to carry out the assignment and the activities, as well as the duration and the order of the activities.

- b) An overview of the project team, including the CVs of the project team members.
- c) Maximum of three client references and a sample of previous work relevant to the deliverables in this ToR.
- d) Budget presented in Euros (ex VAT) with a break-down of days/rate per project team member.
- e) Statement on Ground for exclusion (see Section 6 below).

Administrative:

- f) Completed Detail Request Form (annex 1)
- g) Copy of most recent (audited) financial accounts
- h) Statement of acceptance draft contract (annex 3)

The proposal must be submitted to Preity Khandelwal (at [khandelwal@idhtrade.org](mailto:khandelwal@idhtrade.org)) and Bishal Chhetri (at [chhetri@idhtrade.org](mailto:chhetri@idhtrade.org)) before 1800 Hrs Indian Standard Time, 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024.

## **6. Testing and weighing**

The assignment will be awarded to the service provider with the most economically advantageous tender that is determined based on the evaluation criteria of price and quality.

Grounds for exclusion

1. Service providers shall be excluded from participation in this tender procedure if:
  - a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
  - b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
  - c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the IDH can justify;
  - d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established;
  - e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making of control over them have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity.

**Service providers must confirm in writing that they are not in one of the situations as listed above.**

2. Service providers shall not make use of child labour or forced labour and/or practice discrimination and they shall respect the right to freedom of association and the right to organize



and engage in collective bargaining, in accordance with the core conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

### **Scoring and weighing**

The evaluation criteria are compared and weighed according to the procedure below. This concerns a general outline of the scoring methodology and an explanation how the service provider can demonstrate compliance with the requirements.

#### *Step 1 - Criterion Quality*

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the components. The evaluation committee will score each component unanimously. The evaluation committee will unanimously score each component by assigning scores from 1 to the maximum grading, with the maximum grading representing optimal performance on the component and 1 representing extremely poor performance on the respective component.

[IDH values quality highly, therefore a minimum grade of 3 must be scored by the service provider on each component. If the service provider scores a grade of 3 or less on one of the components they will be excluded from the tender procedure and awarding the contract.]

The proposal will be assessed based on the following selection criteria:

<b>Component</b>		<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Max. Grading</b>
1	<b>Proposal overall</b>	The extent to which the proposal meets the requirements set out in Section 3 above and throughout this document. Can the Service provider deliver the requirement deliverables? Will the Service provider be able to deliver a comprehensive solution?	<b>5</b>
2	<b>Project Management Approach</b>	The extent to which the service provider demonstrates a strong project management approach will be followed from Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring and Control to Completion of the assignment. Moreover, how will the service provider engage effectively with multiple stakeholders and manage framework development based on a highly iterative process.	<b>5</b>
3	<b>Design and Development process</b>	<p>The extent to which the service provider demonstrates that a clear design and development process will be followed and IDH is adequately consulted for input during the design and development.</p> <p>The extent to which it is clear what is required of IDH in terms of human resources, digital assets and other input to deliver the project without being too onerous on our staff and effectively engages with diverse stakeholders.</p>	<b>5</b>



<b>4</b>	<b>Track record</b>	<p>The extent to which the Service provider presents the required level of expertise and knowledge to fulfil the requirements both at team member and company level. This includes knowledge of regenerative agricultural practices, frameworks, and sustainability standards, particularly for commodities like cotton and coffee, as well as expertise in GHG emission estimation, soil health analysis, and the role of gender in agricultural value chains.</p> <p>To extent to which the service provider offers a clear description of the project team, including the relevant experience of team members (particularly in developing MRV frameworks for agricultural or environmental programs) and the time allocation per team member.</p>	<b>5</b>
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### *Step 2 - Criterion price*

A combined price both in Indian Rupees and in Euros (ex any applicable taxes) is to be presented. This is to be broken down by team member rate and hours. The criterion of assessment is “the best price for the proposed level of quality” with a maximum grading of 5.

### *Step 3 - Weighting*

The final score will be weighted 70% on Quality and 30% on Price. If scores of service providers are equal, priority will be based on the total scores that were given for the Criterion Quality. The assignment will be awarded to the service provider that has received the highest score for the Criterion Quality. If the evaluation of the Criterion Quality does not lead to a distinction, the score for the component “Proposal overall” will be decisive. If this does not lead to a distinction, the ranking will be determined by the drawing of lots.

### **Award**

Once IDH has decided to which Service provider it intends to award the assignment, a written notification thereof is sent to all Service providers participating in the tender procedure. The Service provider is contracted via a letter of assignment, following IDH’s template.

### **7. Communication and Confidentiality**

The Service provider will ensure that all its contacts with IDH, with regards to the tender, during the tender procedure take place exclusively in writing by e-mails. The Service provider is thus explicitly prohibited, to prevent discrimination of the other Service providers and to ensure the diligence of the procedure, to have any contact whatsoever regarding the tender with any other persons of IDH than the person stated in the first sentence of this paragraph.

The documents provided by or on behalf of IDH will be handled confidentiality. The Service provider will also impose a duty of confidentiality on any parties that it engages. Any breach of the duty of confidentiality by the Service provider or its engaged third parties will give IDH grounds for exclusion of the Service provider, without requiring any prior written or verbal warning. All information, documents and other requested or provided data submitted by the Service providers will be handled





with due care and confidentiality by IDH. The provided information will after evaluation by IDH be filed as confidential.

#### **8. Disclaimer**

IDH reserves the right to update, change, extend, postpone, withdraw, or suspend the ToR, this tender procedure, or any decision regarding the selection or contract award. IDH is not obliged in this tender procedure to make a contract award decision or to conclude a contract with a participant.

Participants in the tender procedure cannot claim compensation from IDH, any affiliated persons or entities, in any way, in case any of the afore-mentioned situations occur.

By handing in a proposal, participants accept all terms and reservations made in this ToR, and subsequent information and documentation in this tender procedure

#### **9. Annexes to the TOR**

Annexure 1: Detail Request Form (IDH template)

Annexure 2: IDH General Terms and Conditions for Service

Annexure 3: Statement of acceptance draft contract

Annexure 4: List of existing Regenerative Agriculture Frameworks



Annexure 4:

Sl no.	Framework	Links
1	SAI	<a href="https://saiplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/sai-platform_-regenerating-together_september-2023-1.pdf">https://saiplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/sai-platform_-regenerating-together_september-2023-1.pdf</a>
2	RegenAgri	<a href="https://regenagri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/regenagri-standard-criteria-v3.1-1.pdf">https://regenagri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/regenagri-standard-criteria-v3.1-1.pdf</a>
3	Regen10	<a href="https://regen10.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2023/12/Regen10-Zero-Draft-Framework.pdf">https://regen10.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2023/12/Regen10-Zero-Draft-Framework.pdf</a>
4	Textile Exchange	<a href="https://textileexchange.org/knowledge-center/reports/regenerative-agriculture-outcome-framework/">https://textileexchange.org/knowledge-center/reports/regenerative-agriculture-outcome-framework/</a>
5	Unilever	<a href="https://www.unilever.com/files/92ui5egz/production/489410442380812907bc3d97be02ccda1a44ab4b.pdf">https://www.unilever.com/files/92ui5egz/production/489410442380812907bc3d97be02ccda1a44ab4b.pdf</a>
6	Nestle	<a href="https://www.nestle.com/sites/default/files/2022-12/nestle-agriculture-framework-measures.pdf#page=5">https://www.nestle.com/sites/default/files/2022-12/nestle-agriculture-framework-measures.pdf#page=5</a>
7	CC- REEL	<a href="https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ff5d85f409193661a071749/t/662222719be07114e0e7b5aa/1713513079104/CC_REELregen2024_v03.pdf">https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ff5d85f409193661a071749/t/662222719be07114e0e7b5aa/1713513079104/CC_REELregen2024_v03.pdf</a>
8	SBTi	<a href="https://sciencebasedtargets.org/net-zero">https://sciencebasedtargets.org/net-zero</a>
9	SBTN	<a href="https://sciencebasedtargets.org/about-us/sbtn">https://sciencebasedtargets.org/about-us/sbtn</a>